Lookout

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

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What is Geotagging?

Have you ever posted a picture on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr or other social media site? Have you used Foursquare or other location-based social networking? If so, you may have unknowingly released more information than intended.

Geotagging is the process of adding geographical identification to photographs, video, websites and Short Message Service (SMS) messages. It is the equivalent of adding a 10-digit grid coordinate to everything you post on the Internet.

Not a problem? Guess again! There are numerous applications popping up in the market that allow the collection and tracking of your **personally identifiable information (PII)**, such as work and home address, vehicle type, standard work hours, your child's daycare location, etc.

So how does it work? Let's say you live in Orlando and every so often, around the same time, you write something on Twitter referencing going to or getting off work. You had previously uploaded a picture of your car and also complained online about your child's daycare. By using one of the tracking services, someone could determine your general working hours, the area/neighborhood you reside in, your car, and the area of your daycare. If tracked long enough, that someone will soon find the name of your employer and the name of your child's daycare. Personal details increase from there. It's not a matter of maybe -- it is a matter of when!

There are ways to prevent inadvertent sharing of PII. First, remove the location options on your social network. Second, disable the location services of your smartphone. Third, do the following exercise:

1. Log in to your social networking site
2. Look at all of the standard information being shared (name, city of residence, employer, etc.)
3. Look through your pictures. Have you posted pictures of your car, neighborhood, home or street number?
4. Using this easily accessible information, what all can you conclude about yourself?

Some of us can gather much more information than expected. By executing these steps you can further ensure PII is not broadcasted unintentionally.

An April's Fool Tale

Ancient cultures, such as the Romans, the medieval Europeans, and religions like Hinduism, used to celebrate New Year's Day some time near the vernal equinox that ranges from March 20 to April 5. The Julian calendar designated April 1 as the New Year's Day and was so celebrated until 1582 when Pope Gregory XIII ordered the adoption of the new Gregorian calendar that identified Jan. 1 as New Year's Day. However, due to slow communications and the resistance to change tradition, many people continued to celebrate New Year's Day on April 1. The Scottish adopted the new calendar in 1660; Germans, Danes and Norwegians in 1700; and the English in 1752. Many French resisted the change and were dubbed fools and became the target of pranks. Many were sent on 'fool's errands,' received fake party invitations, and tricked into believing something false. The victims were called 'Poisson d'Avril' or 'April Fish' as the naïve fish gets caught easily. Children would often tag a fish's picture on someone's back. April Fool's Day evolved and was popularly celebrated in England and in the American colonies. April Fool's Day traditions continue today.

If you have questions, comments, or a topic you would like to see addressed: please send to Reneka Whicker at reneka.a.whicker@nasa.gov or Brian Gloade at brian.j.gloade@nasa.gov

www.nasa.gov

Safety Notice Reminder

Road Closure: SLF Tow-Way

The SLF tow-way (between SR-3 and Gate 1) is closed to all non-emergency vehicle traffic.

The tow-way is open only during space shuttle launch / landing convoy operations or pre-coordinated space hardware convoys to and from the SLF.

Joggers, walkers and bicyclists must not use this road. Non-emergency traffic shall access the SLF via SR-3 and Astronaut Road.

Tow-way and SR-3 looking northwest

Tow-way and SLF Gate 1 looking southwest

Contact Jake Senior (ISC Aviation Safety) at 867-5709 for questions related to this closure.